

## ***De-stressing Your Relationship***

Relationships often face challenges. These challenges can bring about feelings of stress and anxiety that, if not properly managed, can have serious health and relationship risks.

- 1 **Make a Commitment** to a healthy relationship no matter what difficulties may arise. Eliminate the obstacles to healing and intimacy.
- 2 **Be respectful** even when you are not feeling respected. Disrespect does long-term harm to any relationship. Work to limit sarcasm.
- 3 **Take care of yourself.** You cannot give what you don't have. Develop a small but powerful support system. Find fun and inspiration in something outside of the strained relationship. Don't expect one person to be everything for you.
- 4 **Make regular emotional deposits.** Compliment, validate, encourage, praise, and appreciate your loved ones consistently. Make it a habit.
- 5 **Connect daily** with eye contact, attention, and affection and create special opportunities for deeper connection such as game night, laughter, walks, vacations, or spending individual time.
- 6 **Accept others as they are.** During stressful times, relationships may be strained and critical. Shift your focus away from flaws and toward the qualities you like and appreciate. Loving is a choice and it will return whenever you consciously look for the good things in the people you care about.
- 7 **Maintain healthy boundaries** to protect your family and relationships from common invaders such as jobs, too much activity, boredom, intrusive family members or friends, telephone, computer, TV etc.
- 8 **Plan for intimate encounters with your partner.** Don't wait for it to just happen. Relationships sometimes require planning and effort. Take responsibility for creating the environment as well as the mental and emotional state that will improve your connection. Sit close. Hold each other.
- 9 **Conserve energy.** We have a limited supply of emotional energy. We must decide how to spend it. Create boundaries. Energy is often spent on less important things and people who are not a priority. If you value your relationships, you must save energy for yourself and your loved ones every day.
- 10 **Live your life.** Ask yourselves, "Is this the life we want to be living?" If it isn't, make a plan for gradual change in any area that needs it. Seek help when you feel stuck.

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